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SUBJECT: SENIOR ADVISOR SHORTLEY'S MEETINGS WITH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT VITAL KAMERHE AND PROMINENT TUTSI POLITICIAN AZARIAS RUBERWA

REF: KINSHASA 973

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Samuel Brock for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (S) Summary: National Assembly President Vital Kamerhe told AF Senior Advisor for Conflict Resolution Tim Shortley and PolCouns November 6 that the GDRC had already started on a multi-step process designed to lead to the resumption of full diplomatic relations between the DRC and Rwanda within 45 days. In Kamerhe's view, the two countries should also undertake other confidence building measures, such as reactivating the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Country (CEGPL) and forging closer cooperation on military intelligence. Kamerhe restated his support for direct GDRC-CNDP talks on military and political issues, noting the GDRC should try to find a political space for the CNDP. Kamerhe said that John Numbi, Head of the Congolese National Police, would almost certainly be the GDRC interlocutor for CNDP leader Laurent Nkunda. Kamerhe severely criticized the FARDC leadership, recommending that all FARDC military commanders in the East should be recalled or fired. Shortley welcomed National Assembly engagement on the situation in the East. Shortley stressed how critical it is for the GDRC to take steps to control the remnants of the FARDC in the region and to allow for the creation of humanitarian corridors in FARDC-controlled areas. Kamerhe emphasized that, on the whole range of issues, it would be important to guide President Kabila. End Summary.

Reining in marauding FARDC

¶2. (C) During a November 6 meeting with National Assembly President Vital Kamerhe, AF Senior Advisor for Conflict Resolution Tim Shortley emphasized the immediate challenge of reining in out-of-control FARDC troops in North Kivu. Because of insecurity in the FARDC-controlled areas, humanitarian assistance was, unfortunately, only reaching CNDP-controlled areas. The FARDC should be quartered in specific areas, thus permitting humanitarian corridors in FARDC areas to be established.

DRC Strategy to Improve Relations with Rwanda

¶3. (C) Shortley welcomed the National Assembly's recent plan to address the crisis in the East (reftel). Kamerhe pointed out that it would be critical to deal with the Nairobi and Goma tracks simultaneously. Kamerhe agreed that the GDRC should accelerate the re-establishment of diplomatic relations with Rwanda. He added that the GDRC has already started to implement a plan, which aims to restore full diplomatic relations within 45 days. The first step was the

recent visits by the respective foreign ministers. The GDRC has already begun to restore the former Rwandan Embassy for use, evicting squatters and starting on a make-ready for the building. Then, Charges d'Affaires would open consulates in Goma, Gisenyi, Bukavu, and Cyangugu, followed by an exchange of ambassadors. Kamerhe noted that it would be important to include an economic component in Kinshasa-Kigali relations; relaunching the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Country (CEGPL) could be achieved easily and would help boost trust amongst the DRC, Rwanda, and Burundi.

14. (S) Kamerhe emphasized that any improvement in DRC-Rwandan relations should clearly address Rwandan concerns about FDLR-FARDC cooperation and GDRC claims of Rwandan support for the CNDP. Kamerhe said that observers can argue about the degree of support that the CNDP receives from Rwanda, but, he pointed out that it was only Rwandan President Kagame's intervention that ultimately stopped the CNDP at the gates of Goma. Kamerhe agreed that closer interaction on the military level, particularly on military intelligence sharing would help improve relations between the two countries. The GDRC could, in principle, support a small number of Rwandan intelligence forces embedded in the FARDC units. However, Kamerhe cautioned that the numbers needed to be small and the presence discrete to avoid rekindling Hutu-Tutsi divisions in the region.

"Goma II" Requires Direct, Discrete GDRC-CNDP Talks

15. (C) Kamerhe reiterated the points in the National

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Assembly plan calling for direct GDRC negotiations with the CNDP. First, there would have to be discrete, preparatory discussions with the CNDP, which would develop the terms of reference for a "Goma II." Then, a much larger, inclusive (i.e., with the various rebel groups) conference could follow. In addition to military issues, the GDRC-CNDP talks should entail discussion of a political role for the CNDP, including, perhaps the creation of a political party for the group and government positions. Kabilo would need to be prepared to accept some kind of CNDP participation in the DRC political scene.

16. (C) Kamerhe confirmed that the Head of the Congolese National Police (PNC) force, General John Numbi, would most likely be the GDRC's interlocutor with rebel leader Laurent Nkunda. Numbi was reportedly awaiting a final blessing from President Kabilo. Kamerhe said that Numbi is someone who is strong enough to give frank advice to Kabilo.

FARDC's Collapse

17. (C) Kamerhe stated flatly that, in principle, all of the FARDC's senior military commanders should be replaced, especially those in the Eighth Region in the Kivus. The military commanders in the Kivus were more interested in cultivating and exploiting commercial interests in the region. The FARDC had completely failed and the population has lost confidence in the Congolese military. President Kabilo, in Kamerhe's view, should move quickly to appoint a Chief of Defense. As for integrating the CNDP in the Eighth Military Region, Kamerhe said that this could be an outcome of discussions with the CNDP, but it would not be an opening offer from the GDRC.

Ruberwa: Is there will to engage the CNDP?

18. (C) In a separate meeting on November 6, former Vice-President Azarias Ruberwa told Shortley and PolCouns that Kamerhe was "very progressive" in his ideas to re-energize both the Nairobi and Goma tracks. In Ruberwa's view, the Goma Accords presented a solid formula to stop the

fighting in the East. However, once the accords were signed, there was no further senior-level political engagement to ensure progress. Ruberwa said he was unsure whether the GDRC had sufficient political will to engage the CNDP. It would be crucial, in Ruberwa's opinion, to get a clear and expeditious commitment from Kabilia. If the CNDP doubts the government's willingness to negotiate, then the CNDP will hesitate.

¶ 9. (C) Comment: Kamerhe does indeed appear to want to play a positive role to improve DRC-Rwandan relations and to get the internal peace process back on track. Kamerhe's plan would grant the CNDP some concessions, but it could also produce important dividends: peace and improved state control in the East. While Kamerhe is certainly a powerful figure on the Congolese political stage, he represents the legislative branch. His interest is also seen by many as mostly self-serving: a native son of the east, he is one of Kabilia's main rivals for the Presidency in 2011. In the end, real commitment for re-energizing Nairobi and Goma must come from the Presidency. End Comment.

¶ 10. (U) AF Senior Advisor Shortley has cleared this message.
BROCK